3s Mukherjea. O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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We see that the eldest babe is given a name after its grand-father. The tribal deities and ancestor-spirits are worshipped to bring good-luck to the baby. Members of the tribe offer it their best wishes, and it grows up. When in the twelfth year, by further magico-religious rites like cicatrization with boys and tattooing with girls, they are protected against further dangers at the hands of the malignant powers in their future life ; and thus the Santals keep away from harm the family, the clan and the tribe as a whole from unforeseen calamities.

MARRIAGE

"O, she is the light of the house," exclaimed a Santal with evident pride, when we asked him as to why they married. The Santals are a very realistic tribe, and they have long ago forestalled the drive of some of the modern totalitarian states against bachelors. They cannot simply understand the proposition as to how a man can go on in a state of single blessedness. So both sexes despise the unhappy wretch and do not hesitate to call the solitary thing "a thief, a witch or 'no man'," exactly as E. G. Man observed about seventy years ago.[1] So even today, bachelors and old maids are few and far between in the Santal tribal area, and

1. Ref. E. G. Man, *Sonthalia and the Sonthals*.

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581 like their loin cloth and *mòhua*, every one has a
[589] 'light' in his house.

With the abundant freedom in social intercourse such as these tribes enjoy, their marriages are generally
582 love-marriages. The proper age for marriage is now twenty years for the lad, and after puberty for the girl in Mayurbhanj. In the past, Santals married
[177] adult (about their twenty-fifth year) to men or women of choice ; but now, undoubtedly due to the influence of the neighbouring Hindus, the age for matrimony has come down so as even to infringe the age of consent. Child-marriages are more frequent in Mayurbhanj. Brides, however, must be younger than the husbands but we cannot recall having seen or heard of a wife older than the husband.

595 The tribe does not favour polygamy, unless the wife is barren. The younger brother marries the widow of his elder brother to keep the family property intact. In Mayurbhanj, however, several instances of a man's subsidiary wives came to our knowledge, enjoying a status in law and in the society, exactly equal to their *Mitakshòra* sisters. No
595 instances of a polyandrous system could be directly
835 met with, bur the institution known as *Dhàulià Sagai*, which permits a younger brother to share his elder brother's wife with impunity, "only they must not go about it very openly," has puzzled the

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1952
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interests engross the entire attention of the Santals as a tribe. It is vitally linked up with the economic problem, and when there is a bumper crop and the flowers are full of honey, drinking, dancing and mating flow free with the abanbon characteristic of the tribe. 831

The Santal, even today, is a most prolific race. They cannot at all imagine how a normal man or woman can remain unmarried. We have already seen how the bachelor is looked upon as a pitiable thing by the tribe. If there is such a person nearabout, all Santals try to see him married. Often men and women of the sexually frigid type fall to matrimony, as otherwise, they would be considered as "maica" (hermaphrodite). Similarly. unmarried widows are encouraged to marry and should they stick to a single life, their joking relations make her a butt of ridicule. Even the most Hinduised of the Santals opined that widows without children should marry as soon as possible. So, bachelors are very rare amongst the Santals. An educated Santal told us that he has seen only two such, aged 40/45. in his village. They are the sports of the village. He has not seen an old maid. A Sirdar told us that the only confirmed bachelor in his area wears the dress of a woman (certainly a hermaphrodite.) He has never, in his experience, seen a Santal old maid. An old Santal said that he 581 589 [838]

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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581 589 had nothing but admiration for bachelors and old maids.

832 826 *The Essentials of a Woman's Charms*

As we discuss the requisites for a Santal woman to be erotically attractive, we confess, we were a bit bewildered at the mass of confusing statements that came forth from a large number of Santals of all ages within majority. When everything is boiled down, it can be stated that to have the proper 'sex-appeal' to the Santal, a woman must be plump and bear the dark-brown complexion of a "*magur mach*" (*Magur* fish, Silurus Pelorious, Tilios) as a tipsy old fellow put it with a rare naiveté.[1] Her hips should be fleshy, and breasts, firm and hard, like "*bel*-fruit" (Aegle Marmelos, Correa). Santals generally like women possessing an oval type of face with cheeks having a tendency to bulge out. They hate faces called "Bagh muho" or "bilai muho" (faces like those of tigers and cats). Curiously enough, the average Santals displayed a partiality for a pointed nose with a medium bridge in their women. This is illustrated by the sying, "Mutae usual nana

1 Mr. Fakir Chandra Soren of Baskanali, Bankura, told me that the best complexion was "tel sanṛa" (dark grey glaze).